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### Food Safety Reminders

- Wash Hands Often!
- Don't handle ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.
- Report symptoms of foodborne illness to management.
- Food must come from an approved source
- Cook foods to proper temperatures.
- Use a food thermometer!
- Keep hot food HOT - above 135°F
- Keep cold foods COLD - below 41°F
- Keep foods out of the *Danger Zone* (41°F-135°F)
- Wash, rinse and sanitize food contact surfaces regularly
- Wash Hands Often!

# Food for Thought

## How Cold Is It?

One of the responsibilities of the Certified Food Manager (CFM) is to *provide active managerial control* over the food service operation. This generally means the CFM has an understanding of food safety, the prevention of foodborne illness and the importance of training employees to use safe food handling practices. One part of active managerial control is to keep the food safe that will be prepared and served to consumers. This safety measure often starts with proper refrigeration – is the food stored at 41°F or less to prevent the growth of foodborne bacteria?

This time of year, the temperature outside goes up and often the temperature in the kitchen goes up, too. This can put a strain on the refrigeration units in the kitchen. Most refrigerators are designed to run best at room temperatures BELOW 85°F. What are you doing to keep refrigeration properly maintained in your food establishment?

Have the refrigerators and freezers been serviced – coils cleaned, Freon added, thermostat set - to provide adequate cooling during the hottest part of the year? If a refrigerator is reading 41°F two hours before opening, it may be difficult for that refrigerator to hold foods at 41°F during the busy lunch rush. When refrigerators are not in heavy use from opening and closing the doors – before opening and during the mid-day lull — the internal temperatures should read *well below* 41°F. Refrigeration units under and across from the cookline are of special concern because they typically work harder to maintain the proper cold temperature (41°F). All refrigerators must have a built-in temperature gauge or an internal thermometer.

Check temperatures throughout the day. A temperature log can be helpful in keeping track of refrigerator temperatures over the course of a day. Take the internal temperature at the beginning of the day (when staff first arrives), mid-day (2-3pm) and later in the evening (7-8pm). Your area inspector can help you set up a temperature log, if necessary. If a refrigerator temperature is above 41°F, take some temperatures of the food stored inside that refrigerator. If food temperatures are above 41°F, adjust the refrigerator temperature and move the food to a refrigerator that will keep the proper temperature. Be pro-active. Demonstrate *active managerial control*. Proper refrigeration and temperature control of foods is very important in reducing the risk of foodborne illness. (Page 2)



Set expectations of employees – cold food must be kept cold; refrigerators must measure 41°F or less; prep refrigerator lids must be closed during the slower business hours. Take a look at the food safety practices in your kitchen during the summer months to see if you are doing everything you can to provide active managerial control in your food establishment. You can always ask your area inspector for suggestions regarding active managerial control.

## Employee Health Policy—Phase II

On July 1, Phase II of the Employee Health Policy Initiative started. The Employee Health Policy is important to the operation of a food service facility because it explains to the employees their role in preventing foodborne illness.

During Phase I, a large majority of food service establishments were given information regarding the three parts of a valid Employee Health Policy. During Phase II, the field inspectors will be asking *how* that information has been used to promote an Employee Health Policy in the food establishment. A food service facility will be in compliance with the food regulations if the person in charge can tell:

- 1) how employee training is conducted on foodborne illness, particularly symptoms and prevention of the Big Five foodborne illnesses; and
- 2) how it is documented that employees have been instructed of their responsibility to report symptoms of, diagnosis of or exposure to foodborne illness to management; and
- 3) how a management plan has been put in place to restrict or exclude, as necessary, employees who have symptoms of, diagnosis of or exposure to foodborne illness.

Phase II of the Employee Health Policy Initiative will continue through December 2011. There will be future training available in 2012 for those facilities that are unable to provide the necessary information. The Employee Health Policy is an important part of preventing foodborne illness in food establishments. The Health Department would like to see as many facilities in compliance with this initiative as possible. If you have any questions about your Employee Health Policy, you may speak to your area inspector or call 703-246-2444 for assistance.

## Online Resources Available

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food)

The Fairfax County Health Department Food Safety Program provides many resources on our website which may be useful to the restaurant operator. Details of new fees or regulations may be posted on the website. Do you need hand-washing signs at the handsinks? These are available online, and in multiple languages.

Training materials may be printed from the website. Often, training materials – handouts, signs - are created when the area inspectors see a need for information to be left on site with restaurant operators. These documents are then posted on the website for all restaurants to use. Most of the training materials are available in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai languages.

The Fairfax County Food Code, on which the restaurant inspections and many of the training materials are based, is also available online. Use the website as an easy resource for food safety information. If there is information you would like to see posted on the website, please call 703-246-2444.

## Kitchen Corner Quiz



(answers below)

1. Active managerial control means taking steps ahead of time to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. (T or F)
2. The correct cold-hold temperature for potentially hazardous foods is 45°F. (T or F)
3. It is a good idea to have refrigerators serviced regularly to make sure they are cooling properly. (T or F)
4. If a prep refrigerator is at 41°F two hours before opening, it will do a great job of keeping food cold during the busy lunch rush. (T or F)
5. A temperature log is one way to check refrigerator temperatures throughout the day. (T or F)
6. If a refrigerator is out of temperature, the only thing necessary to do is turn the thermostat colder. (T or F)

Answers: 1. T, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. F

